

NEWS RELEASE

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For More Information, Contact:
Kimberlie Yineman
Robyn Stearns
Oral Health Program
North Dakota Department of Health
Phone: 701.328.2356
800.272.2286 (toll-free)
E-mail: kyineman@nd.gov
rstearns@nd.gov

North Dakota Department of Health Sponsors Dental Sealant Pilot Project

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health recently sponsored a pilot project designed to assess the feasibility of providing dental sealants to school-age children who don't have access to dental care, according to Kimberlie Yineman, director of the department's Oral Health Program.

The Department of Health is required to sponsor the dental sealant pilot project as part of an oral health grant from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Held in Richardton, N.D., on May 1, 2009, the pilot project was made possible through the volunteer efforts of Dr. Gregory Johnson and staff of the Richardton Dental Clinic and the cooperation of Mrs. Janine Olson, principal of Taylor-Richardton Elementary School. On May 1, Dr. Johnson and his staff screened and applied dental sealants to nine second-grade students from the Taylor-Richardton Elementary School who participated in the pilot project.

Dental sealants are a thin plastic coating placed on the pits and fissures of the chewing surfaces of teeth. Sealants prevent tooth decay by sealing out food and decay-causing germs. They can prevent cavities from starting and can prevent the need for expensive fillings. Sealants have been shown to reduce tooth decay by more than 70 percent.

"Fifty-six percent of third-graders in North Dakota have experienced tooth decay," Yineman said. "Sealant programs for school-age children are a good way to identify children in need of dental care and link them to a dental clinic to get preventive care."

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“It is so important for children to receive regular dental care,” Dr. Johnson said. “Tooth decay, although preventable, is a chronic disease that affects children’s ability to concentrate and learn, as well as their speech, eating habits, activity levels and self-esteem. Good oral health is an important part of overall health.”

For more information about the pilot project or dental sealants, contact Kimberlie Yineman or Robyn Stearns, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.2356.

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